# The Flyway

Quarterly newsletter for Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually and Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuges

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The Grays Harbor **Shorebird** and Nature Festival will be held

May 5-7

in Hoquiam.

### A Marauder from Above, Sustained from Below

by Michael Schramm

A flock of birds takes off, flying fast across the estuary. They move in perfect unison; flashing white, then tan, then white all together as they

evasively move through the air. But why? Birds seldom expend energy for flight unless they need to, either to feed or for safety, so what has sparked this panic? If you don't know what to look for you might miss it entirely. The culprit is generally the Peregrine Falcon, moving so fast it approaches

invisibility. It is the stuff of legend. If you are lucky enough to see a Peregrine, it is an awe inspiring moment.

The very name conjures excitement, largely on account of the species' near brush with extinction in the wake of DDT use fifty years

ago. Their population is still recovering, and in the meantime they have become a symbol of conservation. Despite their reputation for rarity, their presence here

on the Refuge really should come as no surprise.

The abundance of Peregrines at the Refuge begins with mud. To human beings, the large mudflats may seem like

an eyesore. One might speculate they are a dead zone, or that the life there must



beautiful, nor is it because we are a species graced with a sophisticated aesthetic sense, but rather it is because

flowers, somewhere in our deep history, indicated a place of abundant fruit. People who loved flowers survived. To

some animals, particularly birds, the mudflats appear every bit as beautiful and rich. These species understand that

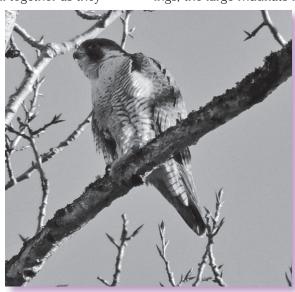


Photo by Michael Schramm/USFWS.

In normal, horizontal flight, a dove is faster, as are most waterfowl ... It is only as a Peregrine dives down from high above that they achieve their famous speed, sometimes well over 200 miles per hour.

Continued on page 4

## On the Wing

By Glynnis Nakai

The end of the year is always a time for reflections and anticipation of what the new year holds. The past year at the Refuge we saw an increase in visitors and students, adoption of a new name, the celebration of the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial, and the continued collaboration with our partners. We have grounded quality Refuge programs that are consistent yet adaptable enough to endure changes, as needed. This is important as we enter into this new year. After 21 years, we are celebrating the accomplishments and retirement of Sheila McCartan who was instrumental in the development and growth of our visitor and educa-

tion programs. Her pulse on the needs of the community and the Refuge, attention to quality outdoor experiences, and developing the next generation of educators has resulted in strong programs that can be adapted and built upon. A change of guard was inevitable, but the remaining staff is well-equipped and capable to take the reins during the interim when a new Visitor Services Manager is recruited. This may be a bumpy ride as we transition to a new manager, but I have great confidence in the staff and volunteers to make this as smooth as possible. We are thankful for the longevity and creativity Sheila has brought to the Refuge and wish her the best in her new life as a retiree.

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." – Theodore Roosevelt

## Sheila's Vision is Now Her Legacy at the Refuge

By Doug Roster

As those familiar with our Visitor Services program have probably heard by now, Sheila McCartan is retiring. She has served a remarkable 34 years of federal service. She spent 6 years working for the Peace Corps, first as a volunteer in Honduras as a teacher trainer at a teacher training high school, and then as a recruiter in the Seattle recruiting office. She then worked 28 years with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, first at Don Edwards San Fransisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, then at the regional office in Portland as the Regional

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Save trees, think green.

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Environmental Education Coordinator. She finally found her way to our Refuge Complex, where her last day of work is December 30. Sheila has had an exceptional career, spanning a number of geographic locations with achievements that have touched many people. She has been at Nisqually for 21 years, which is longer than many of us, so it is hard to



Sheila McCartan, photo by i'ina van Lawick

imagine the Refuge without her.

We take this opportunity to thank her for her dedication and many years of service. As her career comes to an end, her influence carries on in the people she has mentored and the programs she has developed over all these years. She has left an indelible mark and impacted countless lives through the knowledge she has imparted and can relax in retirement, knowing that her life's work has made a difference.

We're not really saying goodbye since Sheila plans to continue participating in several Refuge activities. We hope that she will continue to be involved as a volunteer, perhaps assisting with many of the remarkable programs she has created during her tenure at the Refuge. But we do send our very best wishes and thoughts, and hope her retirement is everything she dreamed it would be.

## **Natural Disasters and Silver Linings**

By Sheila McCartan

When I was an Evergreen State College student in the 1970's, I spent hours with my ornithology class crisscrossing the fields of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge bird watching and conducting field studies. I saw my first Greater Yellowlegs on the banks of McAllister Creek. Little did I know then, that I would spend 21 years of my career with the U.S. Fish Wildlife Service working at Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, one of the Region's most treasured public lands. I could not have been happier in the fall of 1995 when I begin working as the Refuge's Visitor Services Manager.

Three months after arriving at my new job, the Nisqually River had a 500 year flood event that changed the course of history for the Refuge, the Nisqually Delta, and the next 21 years of my work at the Refuge. I will never forget that February day; the entire Refuge was underwater. The Twin Barns were an island surround by a sea of water! Did the farmers in 1932 know that they were building their barns on the highest ground on the Delta?

After the flood waters receded, and with funding from Congress, we made plans to rebuild the Refuge infrastructure, but with a view to the future and what potential the Refuge had for both people and for wildlife. We felt it was an opportunity rarely given for a Refuge to literally rebuild

from the ground up. With a solid foundation of visitor programming already in place, we planned for ways of improving and expanding while keeping the human footprint in check and always putting the needs of wildlife first. The flood also set in motion what would be a 10 year planning effort for the estuary restoration of the Nisqually delta. Good-bye gravel parking lot, sani-cans, and trailers. Hello new construction!

Three years after paddling our canoes down the entrance road and into a flooded trailer that was our office, we dedicated the Refuge's new facilities which today are still some of the most beautiful in the refuge system. The Friends of Nisqually, our newly founded non-profit organization, also opened The Nature Shop on that dedication day in October of 1999. The Administrative Office, the Norm Dicks Visitor Center, the parking lots, maintenance facilities, and Twin Barns Loop Trail are all here thanks to a natural disaster!

During my years at Nisqually, there was rarely a still moment. Six years later another natural disaster, the 2001 Nisqually Earthquake, shook our world but provided yet another silver lining. For safety reasons, we had to close the Twin Barns Education Center after the earthquake and move it to a temporary building. But eventually we received money to rebuild and opened the new Education Center in 2009. My degree in environmental education came in handy as I worked with colleagues, volunteers, and managers to design a facility and program that worked with our site and resources. Building a strong education program at the Refuge with the help of good people and supportive managers has been a major part of my career. Last year just over 10,000 students, along with their adult chaperones and teachers, participated in the Refuge's environmental education program. Providing opportunities for people, especially children, to experience and learn about nature is what has motivated my life-long educational and career choices. Every day I see school kids and families experiencing nature at the Refuge, and it gives me hope

> for the future of our precious natural world.

I would be remiss if I in 1997 and never

did not also mention something about how much fun I have had working on projects at Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge. I joined the Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival Planning Committee

left. Working with such a dedicated group of community volunteers who tirelessly plan this annual festival is truly inspiring. The Shorebird Education Program that we have been bringing to schools in Grays Harbor County since 2003 is another highlight. And I will never forget one fiercely stormy day, fighting my way through a willow thick, machete in hand, stomping out the path for what would become the Refuge's Sandpiper Trail. No natural disasters here, but lots of good work and great people.

There are many more stories I could tell. So much great work has been accomplished, friendships made, and laughs shared. Our national wildlife refuges and the wildlife that depend on them have benefited from our work these past 21 years. I am proud of all of the things we have done together. Continue to do great things for our environment; I plan to be right there with you...in retirement.

#### **Peregrine**

From page 1

each cubic yard of mud can contain up to 30,000 invertebrates. To these birds the estuary's mudflats are like flowers to you or me: something beautiful, an indication of a cornucopia.

The category of bird most inclined toward feasting on the bounty in the mud is the shorebird. These birds would be fairly nondescript were it not for the many

lengths, sizes, and shapes of their beaks. Each species has a beak specially adapted to a particular depth and shape of invertebrate's burrow. Some eat crabs, some

The increasingly common presence of species like the Peregrine Falcon is a testament to a habitat-based conservation approach and to the value of places like Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.

worms, some shrimp. For the animals that eat these organisms, the mudflats are a source of food rich enough to support a global population. In the spring and fall, a diversity of shorebird species migrates through on their way to or from breeding grounds in the arctic. Some species, such as Dunlin, may stay here through the winter, enjoying the good life. But in nature, the good life comes with a price; as shorebirds hunt, they are being hunted.

Peregrine Falcons are renowned for their own special adaptations, which allow them to kill shorebirds with lethal efficiency. Like most other raptors, their eyes are

far more refined than that of humans, and they have talons and a hooked beak perfectly adapted to tearing through flesh. But the most famous adaptation is, without question, speed. So would it surprise you to hear that a Peregrine Falcon is really not that fast? In normal, horizontal flight, a dove is faster, as are most waterfowl species and shorebird species. It is only as a Peregrine dives down from high above that they achieve their famous speed, sometimes well over 200 miles per hour. The goal of the Peregrine is to essentially collide with

their prey, knocking their prey out of the air.

The word Peregrine means "wanderer", a nod to their presence throughout the world. They do, indeed, follow the food from season to season. But the same could be said of most other

species. For all species of bird, their presence depends upon useful habitat with appropriate food. An ideal habitat must be healthy from the bottom up, from the mud to the sky. The creation of such places is the guiding principle of the Wildlife Refuge System. The increasingly common presence of species like the Peregrine Falcon is a testament to a habitat-based conservation approach and to the value of places like Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. You can reliably see Peregrine Falcons at the Refuge whenever Dunlin are present, roughly from mid-September through March.

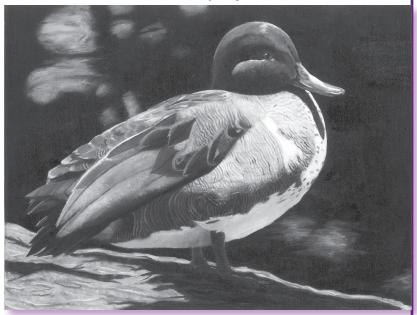
## **Enter the Junior Duck Stamp Contest!**

Attention all kids grades K-12! Put your art skills to the test by participating in the Washington State

Junior Duck Stamp contest! Art work is judged in four groups (K-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12) with three 1<sup>st</sup> place, three 2<sup>nd</sup> place, three 3<sup>rd</sup> place, and 16 Honorable Mentions awarded in each group. All 36 place winners receive certificates, ribbons, and prizes. Washington Best in Show continues on to the National Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest, where the top three artists are awarded scholarships. The winning design of the national contest is used for the \$5 Junior Duck stamp, sales of which are used to provide funding for K-12 environmental education programs. If interested in entering the contest, check out https:// www.fws.gov/birds/education/juniorduck-stamp-conservation-program/juniorduck-stamp-contest-information.php for details and entry applications. The

deadline to enter this year's contest is March 15. Feel free to contact Michael Schramm with any questions

at 360-753-9467 or by email at *michael\_schramm@fws.gov.* 



The 2016 Best of Show, a Green-winged Teal, by 17 year old Crystyn Rocheleau of Vancouver, Washington.

### Refuge Welcomes New Education AmeriCorps Member

Taylor Blomquist enthusiastically joined the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge as the Environmental Education Coordinator with AmeriCorps late Oc-

tober. This is Taylor's second AmeriCorps program. She first served at an elementary school in southeast Seattle doing before and after school programming in addition to in-class tutoring. Taylor spent this past summer as an environmental educator for a nature camp in West Seattle. While exploring tidal pools and leading hikes with seven year olds, Taylor felt a huge pull to further pursue her passion for the outdoors. She hopes to excite people of all ages about the wondrous beauty that nature has to offer while serving at the Refuge.

Taylor was born and raised in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. She journeyed to Washington after graduating from Colorado State University last December with a Bachelor of Science in international soil and crop sciences. Through her degree, Taylor loved learning about global agriculture and international development espe-

cially looking at food access for youth. Her thirst for adventure brought her out to the Pacific Northwest to explore. This untethered soul seeks new opportunities to be challenged and to learn more about how to build a more sustainable community.

As an outdoorsy gal, Taylor likes to explore national parks and REI. One of her favorite things at the Refuge is the majestic view of the Olympic Mountains on those occasional clear Washington days. Another favorite thing is all the silly yet

profound kid quotes that arise from school field trips.

The Refuge staff is excited to welcome Taylor and wish her success!



In late October, fifteen volunteers completed a 10 hour training course and became the newest members of the Refuge's Volunteer Program. They join the already 100 volunteers who contribute an average of 15,000 hours of volunteer time annually to Refuge projects. They will be working at the Visitor Center, Education Program, Administrative Office, and at special events such as our annual Watershed Festival. Next time you're at the Refuge, please welcome the Class of 2016: Bill Arensmeyer, Peggy Brink, Jerry Broadus, Clarice Clark, John and Sue Davis, Jim French, Kathy Kirkland, Vic Merolla, Ronna Schwalk, Bill Sullivan, Leeann Tourtillott, Maureen Traxler, Mike Walker, and Lacey Wright.

## Tim Boyer to Serve as Keynote Speaker at Shorebird and Nature Festival

"Understanding Shorebirds, The Miracle of Migration" will be the topic of Tim Boyer's Keynote presentation on Friday, May 5 at 7pm at the Grays Harbor Shorebird

and Nature Festival. Tim Boyer, award-winning nature photographer and master birder, presents this program on the epic migrations of shorebirds. Combining his love of the outdoors and photography with a passion for birds, Tim's photos capture the stunning beauty and amazing behavior shorebirds. His award winning images have appear ed in numerous magazines, and his fine art prints are sold at art festivals around the Pacific Northwest (his photography can be found at www. TimBoyerPhotography.com). He has a particular love of shorebirds because of their incred-

ible migrations. As a birder and photographer, he is also fascinated by their behavior by the edge of the sea.

Come learn about a variety of shorebirds including the Pacific Golden Plover, Sanderlings, Wandering Tatlers, Bar-tailed Godwits and more! The emphasis of Tim's

talk will be on eight of the 42 common shorebirds found in Washington, which he will use to explore trans-ocean migrations. Find out where and why they migrate and how they are able to travel so far, often across the majority of the Pacific Ocean! Understanding their remarkable journeys requires looking beyond the North American borders to where they spend most of their lives. These birds demonstrate the urgent necessity of a global conservation effort.

You too will be shorebird enthusiasts after seeing Tim's program!  $\checkmark$ 







## **Birding 101**

Sponsored by Black Hills Audubon Society and Friends of Nisqually NWR Complex Dates: Five Saturday mornings, 9-11 a.m.; February 18, 25 and March 4, 11, 18. Where: Norm Dicks Visitor Center at Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. Cost: \$60.00 includes two field trips. Some scholarships are available.

Please join us for our popular **Birding 101** class taught by Scott Mills. This course emphasizes improving bird identification skills. Major topics covered in the class include a discussion of all the factors that can be used to identify birds, a review of birding tools including binoculars and field guides, an introduction to birding terminology, some discussion of basic bird biology, and the basics of taxonomy and bird classification as they relate to identification. Some birding experience is recommended but not required.

ning and specialty birding classes, most recently for Black Hills and Seattle Audubon societies. Since moving to Washington from Tucson, Arizona in 1999, he has done a number of bird surveys at sea on NOAA ships and has been a trip leader for Westport Seabirds.

**To register, or for more information,** contact Mary Russell, at *greenbird321@msn.com* or call 357-6863. Class is limited to 24 persons.

Dr. Mills is a professional biologist with over fifty-five years of birding experience throughout the United States and in several foreign countries. He has previously taught a number of begin-



### New and Renewing Friends Membership Fall 2016

#### Senior/Student (\$15)

Melody J. Mayer
Sally Wenzel
D. J. Snyder
Nancy Yount
Kathryn N. & Willard E. Fox
Caren Crandell
Becky & Larry Russell
Lynne Edele
Cheri Greenwood

#### Individual (\$25)

Jon Bennett
Camille Wooden
Nancy E. Henderson
Sally Bennett
Ralph Arnold
Elena Kuo-Harrison
Nicholas Young

Winter 2016

James Killingbeck Hathleen M. Kirkland Leonard Elliott

#### **Family (\$50)**

Carol & Bill Langford Karen Petersen Alice Nevue & Family Jennifer Deselle Milam & Garrett Milam Jeff & Susan Stuart Tom & Barbara A. Cook

#### Supporting (\$100)

Marian Mehegan & Lium Fox Mary Goodsell Elizabeth Hansen John Cusick & Larry Else Donna L. Poole

#### **Partner (\$250)**

Clyde & Jane Shiner Bert & Sandy Stevens Mary Winkler

#### **Friends of Nisqually NWRC**

is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1998 to promote conservation of the natural and cultural resources and fund educational and outreach programs at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

## Join Friends of Nisqually NWRC!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

	City/State/	Zip					
	Email						
☐ Please send informatio	n on making Frie	nds of Nisq	ually NWR	C a benefici	iary of my estate.		
☐ Check here to receive	an electronic ver	rsion of <i>Th</i>	e Flyway n	iewsletter b	y email.		
Individual/Family Me	mberships	Co	rporate/B	susiness M	lemberships		
□ \$15 Student/Senior		□\$	250 Busin	ess Sponso	r		
□ \$25 Individual		□\$	500 Comr	nunity Part	ner		
□ \$50 Family		□\$	1000 Sust	aining Busi	ness		
□ \$100 Supporting		□\$	2500 Corp	orate Patro	on		
□ \$250 Partner		□\$	5000 + Co	orporate Be	nefactor	,	
□ \$500 Patron □ \$1000 Benefactor	1998 to promoteco	nservation c	of the natural	and cultural	organization establishe resources and fund ed 'ildlife Refuge Comp	uca-	
Please make checks payable	to: Friends of Nisq	ually NWRC	C, 100 Brown	Farm Rd, O	lympia, WA 98516		
Your tax deductible contribution will help preserve the unique habitats, fish, and wildlife of the Nisqually Delta and the Grays Harbor Tideflats.							
OFFICE USE Rec'd	Mo N	New F	Renew	_ Ent	Mld	-	

## Friends of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex

100 Brown Farm Road Olympia WA 98516 Non-Profit Org US Postage **PAID** Olympia WA Permit #206

#### **Return Service Requested**

## Planning a field trip to Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge?

Attend one of our free Field Trip Orientation Workshops to get all the tools you need to confidently guide your students on a meaningful outdoor learning experience. You will be introduced to our hands on indoor activities in our education center, hike the Twin Barns Loop Trail, and learn about one of the largest restoration projects in the Puget Sound! Refreshments will be provided.

#### Workshop Dates: Saturday January 21st 9am-1pm Saturday February 4th 9am-1pm Wednesday February 22nd 4pm-8pm

\*Only teachers who have participated in a field trip orientation workshop within the past three years are able to schedule a class for their field trip between May 15 and the end of the school year. Teachers who have attended a workshop since 2011 and scheduled a field trip within the past two years may continue to schedule field trips between May 15th and the end of the school year without re-taking the workshop.

**Location:** Education Cener at Billy Frank Junior Nisqually NWR (From I-5 Take Exit 114 and follow signs) Clock hours are available for a fee, approved by ESD113.

**To Register:** Download the registration form from our website

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/billy\_frank\_jr\_nisqually/

Under the Visit tab select **"For Educators"** and then **Teacher Training.** 

#### For more information:

nisquallyeducation@fws.gov

Phone: (360) 753-9467 Fax: (360)534-9302

Davy Clark

**Education Coordinator** 

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